



The Old Ironsides Report

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Florida National Guard Infantryman Serves As an Electrician in Iraq

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BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Sgt. Richard J. Pearce is not wired like other infantrymen.

When he and other soldiers of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, a Florida Army National Guard unit based in Orlando, Fla., came into Baghdad, they guarded various enemy prisoner-of-war camps around the city.

The 124th is attached to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment which is attached to the 1st Armored Division.

At one site, soldiers attempted to wire a building, but Pearce saw that they were not doing it properly. He showed them the error in their ways and suggested a better, safer route. However, they had little experience with electrical work, and Pearce decided that he should do it himself.

Electrical engineering is nothing new for this infantryman. In fact, electricity runs like current in his family. Pearce's father worked as an electrician for more than 40 years, and Pearce spent most of his childhood learning his father's trade. While other 9-year-old children were jabbing their fingers into light sockets, Pearce was learning how to route the flow of energy.

Pearce has worked with electricity for more than 25 years now. When he's not deployed, fighting wars, he works at his civilian job with Contemporary Machines, a company that specializes in robotic systems and factory automation.

Knowledge like this is handy when trying to rebuild a city after a war.

Military officials soon caught wind of Pearce's high-wattage expertise and gave him a new job. Today, Pearce is serving as a full-time electrician at the Iraqi Forum building/Coalition Press Information Center (CPIC), which was formerly known as the Baghdad Convention Center.

Since he began working there, he has set up generators, sound systems, and air-conditioning units. Because of his skill and know-how, the Iraqi Forum building is again fully operational.

Now that fluorescent light tubes buzz in the corridors and cool air blows through the lobby, Pearce wants to move the building's technology into the 21st century. Pearce intends to automate the Iraqi Forum building with the newest systems available.

Right now, he is negotiating a deal that will automate the entire building with a fiber-optic network, a system that will control fire systems, temperatures, and computer systems. With an upgrade like this, Iraqis will have the opportunity to learn from this new technology and spread the knowledge throughout Baghdad and, hopefully this knowledge will filter out to other parts of the country.

"I want to bring Iraqi electricians here and show them how the system works," said Pearce. "They have to



Sgt. Richard J. Pearce, infantryman, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, a Florida Army National Guard unit, checks the meters on the control panel for the generators at the Iraqi Forum/Coalition Press Information Center, formerly known as the Baghdad Convention Center. Photo by Spc. Ryan Smith, 372nd MPAD

start somewhere. They might as well start at the top.

"Pearce also trains his workers on the latest technology. He has a team of roughly 25 Iraqi electricians and technicians that work with him at the CPIC. His objective is to bring these men into the 21st century.

"The men train well," said Pearce. "They already have the basic skills, and they're eager to learn more. They want to catch up to the rest of the world. They absorb everything."

Iraqis are not the only ones learning from Pearce. During a workday, electricians from all over town approach Pearce for advice, including private contractors such as KBR (Kellogg, Brown and Root), and even some from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"People come from all over town to meet with Pearce," said Capt. Blake J. Glass, C Company commander, 2-124th. "Most times, he suggests that they rethink their methods, and then he shows them another way. They're all very impressed."

Pearce is modest about his ability, saying that "You've either got it or you don't. I just got lucky, and do."

Modest or not, Pearce exemplifies the versatility of the Army National Guard. After all, he's an infantryman with an upgraded processor.

NEWS

FBI: Iraq Bomb Made From Old Munitions

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The FBI said Wednesday the deadly bomb that ripped through U.N. headquarters in Iraq was made from 1,000 pounds of old munitions, including a single 500-pound bomb - all materials from Saddam Hussein's prewar arsenal that required no "great degree of sophistication" to assemble. An FBI special agent at the site of Tuesday's unprecedented attack on the world organization said it was impossible yet to say whether the bomb was the work of Saddam loyalists or foreign terrorists

San Diego Zoo's Giant Panda Gives Birth

SAN DIEGO (AP) - Bai Yun, a 13-year-old giant panda, gave birth to the first of twin cubs, but researchers at the San Diego Zoo were still waiting more than 18 hours later for the second arrival. Monitors watched around the clock but there hadn't been any sign of the second panda Wednesday morning, zoo spokesman Paul Garcia said.

A Smart Tip from 1AD Safety

IMPROVISED GUNNER POSITIONS

- ▶ Designate Vehicles with Authorized Gunners Turret to be Used for Escorts
- ▶ Ensure Weapon is Secure for Firing
- ▶ Conduct Risk Assessment of Mission
 - Is the Mission Essential
 - Gunners Seat is Stable for Mission
 - Restraint for Gunner
 - Remove all Non-Essential Equipment

LEADER'S MUST REVIEW IMPROVISED GUNNERS POSITIONS

Chaplain's thought for the day:

Attitude

Attitude is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than what people do or say. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill.

The remarkable thing is, we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

We cannot change our past. We can not change the fact that people act in a certain way. We can not change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.

from *Strengthening Your Grip* by Charles Swindoll

SPORTS

Spencer Loses Appeal in NASCAR Fight

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) - Jimmy Spencer's appeal of his one-week NASCAR suspension for punching Kurt Busch was denied Wednesday, meaning "Mr. Excitement" will be parked this weekend at Bristol Motor Speedway. In upholding the penalty, the National Stock Car Racing Commission found that regardless of "alleged provocation or the exact magnitude of the physical contact, an inappropriate line had been crossed."

Oddly Enough:

Lion Dung on the Tracks Keeps Deer Safe

TOKYO (Reuters) - Railway officials in Wakayama, a largely rural prefecture in western Japan, racked their brains for months for a way to keep wild deer from running onto train tracks and getting killed. Finally, inspiration struck: scare them off with lion dung. Taking hints from research by forestry experts, who found that deer shunned the aroma of the king of beasts, officials at the local branch of West Japan Railway Co (JR West) got the material they needed from a local amusement park. "I forget how much, but it was a whole lot. I think about 100 kg (220 lb)," Takao Maeda of JR West in Shingu, some 450 km (280 miles) west of Tokyo, said on Wednesday. The strategy appears to have worked for now. For along a 400 meter (1,300 ft) stretch of tracks where a number of deer were struck last year -- the Asahi Shimbun newspaper said 30 between January and October -- none have been hit since the dung was spread last November. In fact, officials are now looking to spread the success even further by using the same method elsewhere. Maeda admitted that there is, however, a huge drawback. "The odor is really, really foul," he said. "So we can only use it on tracks in uninhabited areas." The plan is also apparently hard on the amusement park, which freezes the dung and stocks it until needed. But Maeda said the trouble is worth it. "We're all really pleased to help keep the deer from being killed."

On This Day In History: ***August 21st, 1944***

Representatives from the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China meet in the Dumbarton Oaks estate at Georgetown, Washington, D.C., to formulate the formal principles of an organization that will provide collective security on a worldwide basis-an organization that would become the United Nations. A more detailed blueprint for the U.N. would be drawn up at both the Yalta Conference in February 1945, and the San Francisco Conference, which would produce the U.N. charter later that year.

source:historychannel.com